

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 7-15 remain in the application. Claims 1-6 have been cancelled. The remaining claims have been amended to define the invention more clearly. New dependent claim 15 has been added.

Counsel and the Examiner discussed the above-identified application on February 1, 2005. The Examiner asked for a few clarifying amendments that the Examiner believed would put the application in condition for allowance. In particular, the Examiner noted that the angle α shown in FIGS. 7A and 7B was not an obtuse angle as set forth in the claims. Accordingly, the Examiner asked to have the claims amended by deleting the word "obtuse" and inserting the word "acute". Counsel entered that amendment and a few other minor clarifying amendments requested by the Examiner. The Amendment then was submitted by facsimile with the understanding that the application would be allowed. Examiner Hyeon then contacted counsel by telephone to indicate that further searching uncovered a relevant reference. The Examiner indicated that the Preliminary Amendment would be entered, but that a rejection would have to be issued based on the new reference.

The Office Action issued February 7, 2005. The claims were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,558,208 to Suzuki considered in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,519,170. The Examiner concluded that Suzuki met most of the limitations of the claims existing prior to this Amendment. However, the Examiner acknowledged that Suzuki did not disclose a tubular seal and fastening pieces crimped to surround the outer circumferential surface of the seal. To address this admitted deficiency

of Suzuki, the Examiner turned to Nabeshima which shows a terminal fitting with fastening portions crimped to a seal.

Independent claims 7 and 11 have been amended to define the invention more clearly. In this regard, the Examiner will note that the word "acute" has been amended back to --obtuse--. This aspect of the original claims was believed to be accurate. However, FIGS. 7(A) and 7(B) did not accurately depict the angle defined in the claims. As a result, this Amendment is submitted concurrently with a Replacement Sheet for FIGS. 7(A) and 7(B) to show the angle (α) more accurately.

Suzuki is directed to a terminal fitting with insulation engaging arms 12a and 12b disposed and configured to slide in overlapping relationship with one another as part of the crimping process. Suzuki is concerned that one insulation engaging arm may partly engage on top of the opposed insulation engaging arm to prevent a secure gripping of the insulation. To address this, Suzuki provides bevels on both inner and outer surfaces of each insulation engaging arm. With this construction, the inner bevel 18b on the insulation engaging arm 12b will slide along the outer bevel 28a of the insulation engaging arm 12a as shown in FIG. 6(A). Thus, the outer bevel 28a will function as a ramp to cause the insulation engaging arm 12b to move in the direction D. Consequently, the insulation engaging arms 12 and 12 will reach the FIG. 6(B) condition where the insulation engaging arms 12 and 12 are in edge-to-edge disposition.

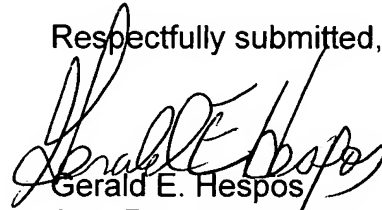
Claim 7 has been amended to define each fastening piece as having a contact surface, an outer surface facing away from the contact surface and parallel thereto, an edge extending perpendicularly from the outer surface towards the contact surface and a seal protecting surface extending between the edge and the contact surface.

The seal protecting surface is defined as being aligned at an obtuse angle to the contact surface. An edge aligned substantially perpendicular to the outer surface of the Suzuki insulation engaging arm would prevent the Suzuki engaging arm 12b from moving in the direction D as shown in FIG. 6(A), and hence would prevent Suzuki from achieving its alleged benefits. The Nabeshima reference does not overcome the deficiencies of Suzuki in this regard. Hence, it is submitted that amended claim 7 and its dependent claims are patentable over the hypothetical combination of Suzuki and Nabeshima.

Amended claim 11 defines the fastening pieces as being spaced from one another along the longitudinal direction. Suzuki is constructed so that the insulation engaging arms will be in side-to-side abutting relationship after crimping. Nothing in Suzuki suggests spacing the insulation engaging arms apart along the longitudinal direction. Suzuki provides the bevels only because the insulation engaging arms slide partly over one another and into edge-to-edge relationship. The Nabeshima reference does not overcome this aspect of Suzuki in that Nabeshima provides an overlap after crimping. Accordingly, amended claim 11 and its dependent claim are believed to be patentable over the hypothetical combination of Suzuki and Nabeshima. In this latter regard, the Examiner will also note that new dependent claim 15 includes limitations similar to the limitations that were added to claim 7 and pertaining to the edge extending substantially perpendicularly inwardly from the outer surface of the fastening pieces and to the seal protecting surfaces. The Suzuki/Nabeshima combination certainly does not suggest this aspect of the invention.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, it is submitted that claims remaining in the application are directed to patentable subject matter, and allowance is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



Gerald E. Hespos

Atty. Reg. No. 30,066

Customer No. 001218

CASELLA & HESPOS LLP

274 Madison Avenue - Suite 1703

New York, NY 10016

Tel. (212) 725-2450

Fax (212) 725-2452

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